All officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) are now eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. In addition to the above, 750 posts of Lieutenant Colonels have been upgraded to Colonel's rank. The tenure of SSC officers has also been extended from 10 years to 14 years.

Besides, the Armed Forces have undertaken sustained Image Projection and publicity campaigns to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Candidate-friendly recruitment procedures to attract more number of candidates and a focused publicity drive in various institutions to attract potential candidates have been undertaken. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, counselling and motivational talks in schools, colleges and NCC camps are also some of the other measures in this direction. A total number of 100 vacancies per year are earmarked for NCC cadets, holding 'C certificates for commissioning as Short Service Officers. Besides, officers of the Territorial Army can opt for Short Service Commission in the regular Army on voluntary basis.

The Government has also appointed VI Central Pay Commission to go into the question of revision of pay and allowances etc. of all the Government servants including the Armed Forces. The three Services have presented a joint memorandum to the Pay Commission suggesting revision of pay and allowances and other service conditions .The matter has also been discussed with the Pay Commission by the three Service Chiefs and officers in the Ministry of Defence.

Change of offset condition

671. SHRI MOHAMMED AMIN:
SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any move to change the mandatory offset condition for imported defence items which mandates the foreign supplier to compulsory access 30 per cent of the import value from an indigenous source; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A. K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Offset clause as incorporated in Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP)-2006 is applicable for all procurement proposals where indicative cost is Rs. 300 Crores and more, and the schemes are categorized as 'Buy (Global)' involving outright purchase from foreign/Indian vendors and 'Buy and Make with Transfer of Technology' i.e. Purchase from foreign vendor followed by Licensed Production DPP-2006 also prescribes varying offset percentages above 30%.

The DPP-2006 provides for review of the procurement procedure after every two years in the light of the practical experience gained in its implementation.

Increase in earthquakes

672. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that earthquakes are rapidly increasing these days;

(b) if so, whether Union Government has set up a Committee of Experts in this regard to find out the location of earthquake well in time;

(c) if so, the details thereof and whether the Committee has submitted its report to the Government; and

(d) what steps are proposed to be taken by Government to inform the public about earthquakes well in advance?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Statistical analysis of the available earthquakes database does not indicate any apparent increasing trend in the earthquake frequency. With the densification of seismic network in recent times, it has become possible to detect lower magnitude earthquakes over India.

(b) and (c) Government of India has not set up any committee to find out the location of earthquake well in time. However, India Meteorological Department (IMD) is the nodal agency in the country to monitor the earthquake activity on 24x7 basis and notify the magnitude and location soon after the occurrence of any earthquake in and around the country. The capability has been augmented recently in the wake of the Tsunami waves that struck the Indian coasts on 26th December, 2004. As part of the network augmentation, a Real Time Seismic Monitoring Network (RTSMN) consisting of 17 field stations has been set up with auto-location capability to provide timely input to the Tsunami Warning System in Operation at Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad.

(d) Providing information prior to the occurrence is possible as on today, anywhere in the world as no prediction methodology exists. Global scientific community is making efforts to study the pre-cursory phenomena of earthquakes.

Setting up of National Security Commission

673. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKHAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any proposal for appointment of a National Security Commission as directed by Supreme Court in 2005;

(b) if so, the details of the action taken thereon; and

(c) if not, the specific reasons for not setting up of such a commission so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) to (c) The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its judgement dated 22.9.2006 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 310/1996, *inter-alia,* directed that a National Security Commission may be set up to prepare panels for appointment of Chiefs of the Central Police Organisations (CPOs), review measures to upgrade the effectiveness of these forces, improve their service conditions, ensure proper coordination between them and proper utilization of the forces. The Government has considered the matter and constituted a Committee on National Security and Central Police Personnel Welfare on 2.1.2007 under the Chairmanship of Union Home Minister to prepare panels for appointment of Chiefs of Central Para Military Forces (CPMFs), consider issues pertaining to the service conditions of the CPMFs personnel and any other related matter. There are various mechanisms, in the Government to deal with other security related matters.